



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A169911

Marine fliers batter Hill 67 with high explosives and napalm on 3 February in support of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines' two-reinforced-platoon-raid on the Chinese-held Ungok hill mass to destroy fortifications, inflict casualties, and take prisoners. The air strikes were designed to divert enemy attention from the final objective area.

routes of attack and withdrawal, and clearing mines from them. The complex operation, named Clambake, required a half-dozen rehearsals, the last on 1 February. Unlike Operation Wake-up in November 1952, which had sought to take prisoners and gather intelligence on the Chinese defenses, planners designed Clambake primarily to kill the enemy and destroy his bunkers and trenches.

The raid began at first light on 3 February, when three platoons of tanks roared toward the enemy-held high ground—Hill 104, Kumgok, and Red Hill—a short distance west of the real objective, Ungok. While the armored vehicles cut loose with 90mm guns and flamethrowers, the 1st Battalion,

11th Marines, added to the realism of the feint by shelling the apparent objective.

Taking advantage of the diversion, two reinforced platoons from Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines—armed with bangalore torpedoes to breach barbed wire and flamethrowers, satchel charges, and 3.5-inch rocket launchers to destroy heavier fortifications—stormed Hills 31 and 31A. The tanks taking part in the diversion protected the left flank of the attacking Marines by crossing a frozen paddy to open fire on the trenchline connecting Ungok with the hills to the west. The Chinese blazed away at the Marine tanks that either protected the flank from beyond the rice paddy or accompanied the assault force and suc-

ceeded in destroying a flame-throwing M-4 Sherman tank. Supported by air, armor, and artillery, the Marine raiding party prevailed. Clambake captured no prisoners but accomplished its main purpose by collapsing bunkers, trenches, and caves, and killing perhaps 390 Chinese before the attackers withdrew. Marine casualties totaled 14 killed and 91 wounded.

Operation Clambake demonstrated anew the value of planning and rehearsal, the ability of flame-throwing tanks to discourage Chinese tank-killer teams armed with shoulder-fired rocket launchers, and the importance of coordinating air, artillery, and armor in support of an infantry assault. Colonel Lewis W. Walt, commander



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A169719

After being examined at the company aid station, a Marine of Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, who was wounded during the battalion's daylight raid on Ungok is put onto a helicopter for evacuation to a hospital ship for further treatment.

Officers of the 5th Marines assemble for a photograph during a lull in the fighting. Pictured in the front row, from left, are: LtCol Oscar F. Peatross, LtCol Jonas M. Platt, Col Lewis W. Walt, LtCol Edwin B. Wheeler, LtCol Robert J. Oddy, and LtCol James H. Finch. Second row, Maj Harry L. Sherwood,

Maj Robert L. Willis, Capt Ralph L. Walz, Maj Jack M. Daly, Maj Ross T. Dwyer, Jr., Maj Robert H. Twisdale, Capt Richard G. Gilmore, and Maj William C. Doty. Third row, Capt James R. Schoen, Capt Dean W. Lindley, Capt James E. Hendry, and Capt Arthur J. Davidson.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A170216



The Marine Division and Its Weapons

Between 1 January 1953 and the end of the fighting in July, the strength of Marine Corps ground forces hovered between 25,000 and 28,000, fluctuating as casualties occurred, tours of duty or enlistments expired, and replacements arrived. In terms of organization, the 1st Marine Division adhered to a triangular concept, with three organic infantry regiments—the 1st, 5th, and 7th Marines—an artillery regiment, the 11th Marines, and a variety of other combat and support elements under control of the division or its components. The combat elements employed tanks, mortars, and other weapons; the support units provided such specialized activity as transportation, by truck or amphibian tractor, communications, engineering, reconnaissance, and cargo handling.

On the Jamestown Line, a fourth regiment served with the 1st Marine Division, the 1st Korean Marine Regiment, which had been organized, trained, and equipped with the assistance and advice of U. S. Marines. The Korean Marine regiment, with a maximum strength in 1953 of 4,400, had been attached to the 1st Marine Division in time for the Inchon invasion of September 1950, but after the Chosin Reservoir fighting, the Korean Marines passed under the control of the Republic of Korea's Army. During 1951, however, the Korean Marine regiment was again attached to the 1st Marine Division and, along with the 5th Battalion that joined in 1952, remained a part of the American division for the rest of the war. The Korean Marines assigned to the division had their own organic artillery and armor. The 2d Korean Marine Regiment provided troops to man the islands off the east and west coasts.

The basic infantry weapons of the 1st Marine Division

had seen action in World War II. Riflemen still used the semi-automatic M1 or, if trained as snipers, the bolt-action M1903 with a telescopic sight. Although designed for World War I, the Browning Automatic Rifle still increased the firepower of the Marines. Officers, or those enlisted men assigned to crew-served weapons like mortars or machine guns, carried the .45-caliber pistol or the lightweight .30-caliber carbine, which came in both automatic and semi-automatic versions.

The standard crew-served infantry weapons had also helped fight World War II. The 60mm, 81mm, and 4.2-inch mortars were at best modifications of older weapons, as were the machine guns, whether heavy .50-caliber weapons, water-cooled .30-caliber guns, or lightweight, air-cooled .30-caliber types. The 3.5-inch rocket launcher, however, had replaced the 2.36-inch Bazooka of World War II, which had failed to effectively penetrate the armor of the Soviet-built tanks used by the North Koreans and Chinese.

Artillery and armor relied heavily on designs used in World War II or intended for that conflict. The 11th Marines, aided by a battery of 4.5-inch rockets on multiple launchers, provided the division's organic fire support with three battalions of 105mm howitzers and one battalion of 155mm howitzers. A battalion of tanks added to the mobile firepower of the division with weapons ranging from rebuilt M-4 Shermans from World War II, some of them mounting a flamethrower as well as a 105mm gun, to new M-46 Pershings with a 90mm gun.

In short, the 1st Marine Division was using the weapons of World War II to fight the kind of trench warfare characteristic of World War I.

majority of enemy installations were relatively undamaged," perhaps because the Chinese bunkers were so solidly built.

Although the raids that culminated in Operation Charlie were the most ambitious attacks during February, Chinese troops and the American and South Korean Marines conducted many smaller probes. On the night of 12-13 February, for example, a Chinese platoon, supported by mortars and artillery, tested the defenses of Outpost Hedy on Hill 124. Two nights later, hostile troops stalked a patrol from the 7th Marines that

was attempting to set up an ambush and forced it to turn back. On 19 February, artillery and mortar fire frustrated a Chinese attack on Combat Outpost 33, manned by South Korean Marines.

The Marines, whether American or South Korean, exerted pressure of their own. On the night of 13-14 February, two platoons of South Korean Marines had successfully raided Hill 240, on the west bank of the Sachon River roughly three miles upstream from its conflux with the Imjin. On the morning of the 22d, the 5th Marines raided Hill 35A, some 1,300 yards southwest

of the Ungok hill mass, using flamethrowers to deadly effect. On the following night, a reinforced platoon from the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, supported by four M-46 tanks set out to raid Hill Yoke, southwest of Bunker Hill. Shortly after midnight, however, as the raiding party regrouped for the final assault, the Chinese struck from ambush. Another reinforced platoon went to the aid of the first, and the enemy broke off the action; but not before the raid on Hill Yoke had to be called off, even though the Marines accounted for perhaps five times their own



1stMarDiv Historical Diary Photo Supplement, Feb53

Three Marines from Company F, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, who participated in the raid on Hill 15 (Detroit), display captured enemy weapons and material. The raid was launched during early daylight hours with a smoke screen in an attempt to gain surprise.

During February and March, as night fighting intensified, Marine M-46 Patton tanks assigned to Company D, 1st Tank

Battalion, fire their 90mm guns to harass the Chinese and disrupt their movement.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A169267



losses of five killed and 22 wounded.

The succession of raids and ambushes continued into March. In a restaging of Operation Clambake, Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, attacked Hill 31A of the Ungok massif on the 19th. Once again, air strikes, and artillery preparations shattered the pre-dawn calm and forced the defenders to move to positions on the reverse slope until the attacking Marines withdrew. On the same morning, however, the enemy hit Outposts Esther and Hedy and tried unsuccessfully to crack the Jamestown defenses to the rear of Hedy, failing despite a lavish expenditure of mortar and artillery shells.

Improvements in Logistics

During the first three months of 1953, the supply of howitzer



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A170050

Cargo handling personnel prepare to hook a load of ammunition to a Sikorsky HRS-2 helicopter of Marine transport squadron 161 during Operation Haylift II, the five-day experiment to resupply two frontline regiments carried out in late February.

ammunition increased, and the restrictions on artillery support, in effect during the autumn, ceased. The availability of hand grenades also improved, but 81mm mortar shells remained in short supply.

Even as the ammunition shortage eased, the Marines had to impose restrictions on the use of gasoline and diesel fuel. In January 1953, consumption of gasoline declined by 17 percent from the

previous month, and diesel fuel by seven percent. Stocks were rapidly replenished, however, so that in February consumption returned to normal.

Refinements in equipment also appeared. A thermal boot worn during the Korean winter of 1952-1953 afforded better protection against cold and dampness than the footgear it replaced, but the leather combat boot wore out all

too quickly. Redesigned body armor began arriving in November 1952. The new model protected the groin as well as the upper body, greatly improving morale as it reduced casualties still further.

Experiments continued in the use of helicopters as flying pack mules to deliver supplies over broken terrain. In February 1953, Lieutenant Colonel John F. Carey's Marine Helicopter Transport Squadron 161 (HMR-161) carried out Operation Haylift II, resupplying two front-line regiments, the 5th and 7th Marines. This operation, lasting from 23 through 27 February, proved more demanding than Haylift I, conducted in September 1952, which had resupplied only one regiment. On the first day of Haylift II, Carey's squadron had to divert helicopters from the 7th Marines to rush ammunition to the other regiment, and on the final morning fog disrupted the schedule of flights. Nevertheless, Haylift II delivered 1.6 million pounds of cargo; five times the total of the earlier operation.

Fighting Intensifies

When the winter of 1952-1953 ended, the deployment of the 1st Marine Division remained essentially unchanged, although the unit on the right was now the U.S. Army's 2d Infantry Division rather than the British 1st Commonwealth Division. The American Marine regiments held the right of the line—the 5th and 1st Marines occupying the Jamestown positions and the 7th Marines currently in reserve. Beyond the Panmunjom corridor, South Korean Marines defended the portion that extended to the north bank of the Han River. On the south bank of the Han, the division's amphibian tractor battalion and the Kimpo Provisional

Air Support for the Division

Marine Corps aviation continued to play a critical role on the battlefield. Indeed, its value had increased as the Fifth Air Force, which exercised operational control over land-based Marine airmen, shifted emphasis to targets on or near the frontlines and away from industries, transportation links, and command and control facilities, all of them already heavily bombed. Taking advantage of this change, Major General Vernon E. Megee, who in January 1953 replaced Major General Clayton C. Jerome in command of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, persuaded Major General Glenn O. Barcus, commander of the Fifth Air Force, to abandon the practice of dealing directly with Marine aircraft groups or even squadrons and work through the wing headquarters. To facilitate planning within the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, Megee revitalized and enlarged his G-3 section, which, he conceded, had become "somewhat rusty." General Megee also replaced the lone Marine Corps liaison officer at the Joint Operations Center with an element drawn from of the wing's G-3 section that could deal more efficiently with requests for air support.

Barcus endorsed Megee's plan to expand the role of wing headquarters, but the Air Force general retained control over close air support, even though it was a Marine Corps specialty. Policy established jointly by the Army and Air Force, to which the Navy assented, required that the Joint Operations Center, which now had a greater Marine presence, approve requests for this kind of mission. In waging the air war, the Joint Operations Center, paid stricter attention to requests for close air support, tending to screen carefully these urgent strikes while assigning Megee's headquarters greater responsibility for interdiction, armed reconnaissance, and other missions, by day or by night, that had been planned in advance against targets 3,000 yards or

more beyond the main line of resistance.

The cautious attitude toward close air support reflected the potential danger to friendly troops inherent in the kind of operations routinely flown by the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. Indeed, with a mere 14.5 percent of the available tactical aircraft, Marine airmen had undertaken between 30 and 40 percent of all the close air support missions flown for the United Nations forces between January and October 1952. These attacks, some of them within 100 yards of United Nations troops, could accidentally cause friendly casualties. The battlefield itself—a succession of similar hills and ridges, separated by draws and intermittent streams, with few obvious landmarks except for major reservoirs or rivers—contributed to the possibility of error. During the first nine months of 1952, Marine pilots figured in 18 of 63 incidents in which air strikes killed or wounded friendly troops.

News reports appearing in the United States during February 1953 focused on the involvement of Marine airmen in 28.5 percent of the recent accident attacks that killed or wounded friendly troops. Ignoring the dangerous nature of these strikes, which included almost all the targets within 100 yards of friendly forces, the press accused the Marines of carelessness, a charge that had no merit. Given the difficulty in pinpointing targets on the Korean battlefield, effective close air support involved danger to the troops on the ground, especially those manning outposts that were surrounded or under simultaneous attack from various directions. General Megee, when evaluating a January 1953 strafing run by Marine jets that killed one Marine and wounded another, concluded that the incident "resulted from the inescapable operational hazard incident to laying on a real close strike." The same judgment applied to the other similar accidents.

Regiment, the latter an improvised "United Nations" force using armored amphibian tractors as artillery, manned the defenses in addition to controlling civilians within the regimental sector and regulating river traffic.

Except on the far left of the division's line, where the Han River provided a natural barrier, a series of combat outposts contributed to the security of the main line of resistance. From right to left, the principal outposts were East Berlin, Berlin, Vegas, Reno, Carson, and

Ava, all manned at the end of March by the 5th Marines. The 1st Marines maintained Corrine, Dagmar, Esther, Ginger, Bunker Hill, Hedy, Ingrid, Kate, and Marilyn. Beyond the Pan-munjom corridor, the South Korean Marines held, from right to left, Outposts 39, 33, 31, and 51.

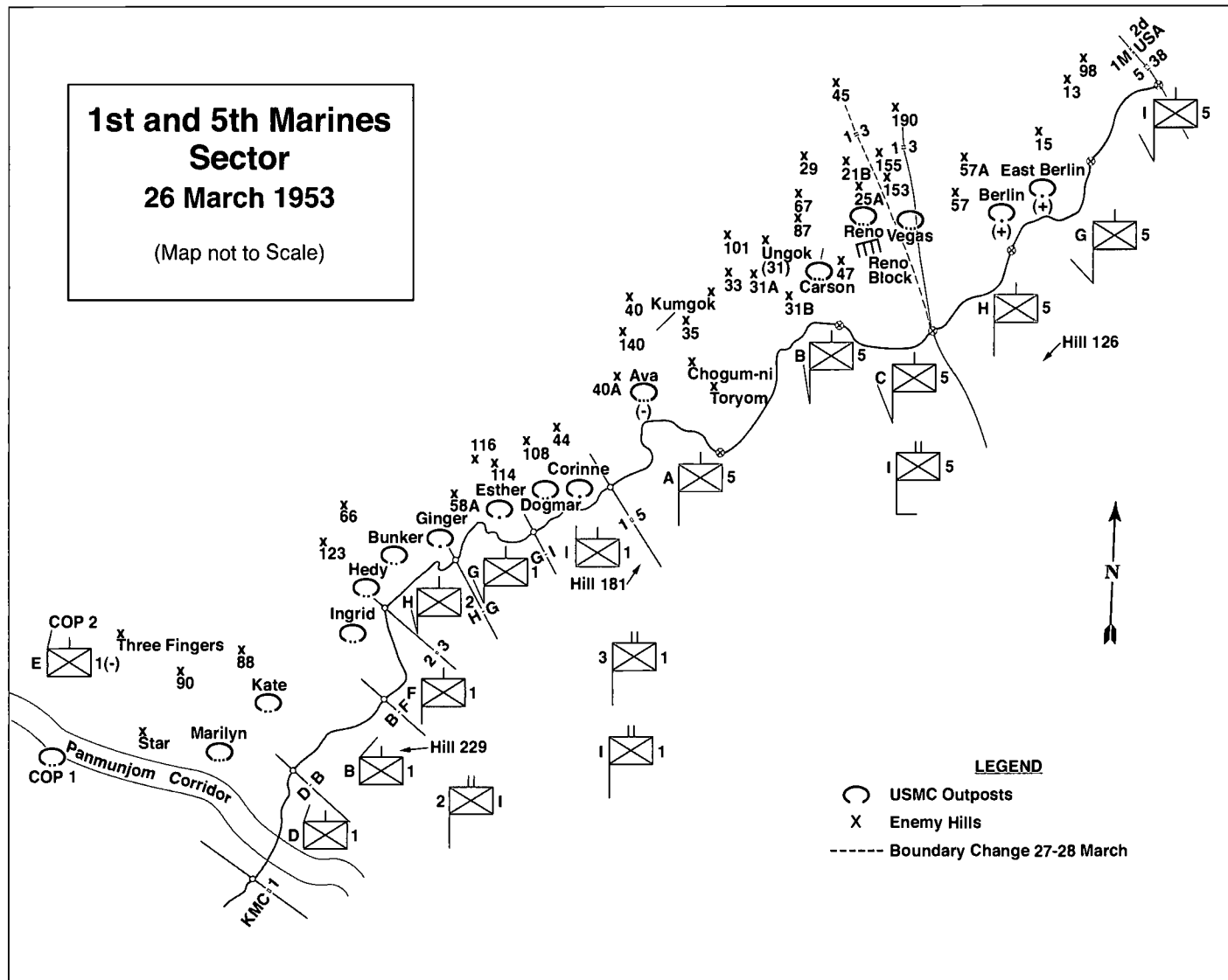
As it had during the winter now ending, the 11th Marines provided artillery support for the infantry regiments manning the Jamestown Line and its outposts, using the firepower of three battalions of

105mm howitzers, a battalion of 155mm howitzers, and a battery of multiple 4.5-inch rocket launchers. One battalion of 105mm howitzers supported the 5th Marines and another the 1st Marines. The third such battalion provided general support of the division and stood ready to reinforce the fires of the battalion supporting the 5th Marines, which held a critical sector. Both the 155mm howitzers and the rocket launchers rendered general support for the division. The South Korean Marines depended

1st and 5th Marines Sector

26 March 1953

(Map not to Scale)



primarily on a battalion of 75mm guns, attached to the 11th Marines. U.S. Army artillery battalions, assigned to I Corps, could reinforce the fires of the 11th Marines anywhere along the line with 155mm howitzers and 8-inch howitzers. To protect the bridges across the Imjin River to the rear of the Jamestown Line against possible aerial attack, the Marines deployed a provisional antiaircraft artillery platoon armed with automatic weapons.

The 1st Marine Division's tank battalion continued to support the defenses of the Jamestown Line, mainly with M-46 tanks mounting 90mm guns, though the older M-4s armed with a 105mm howitzer and a flamethrower were available. The

battalion assigned one tank company to support each of the line regiments and designated a third as a forward reserve to reinforce the main line of resistance or spearhead counterattacks. The fourth company became the rear reserve, undergoing unit training and conducting maintenance for the entire battalion.

The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, now participating more directly in planning air strikes, supported the division with an array of piston-engine and jet types, fixed-wing models and helicopters. Besides conducting strikes, the wing placed its helicopters and light observation planes at the disposal of the division. Helicopters evacu-

ated the wounded and delivered supplies, while the light planes flew reconnaissance and liaison missions, directed air strikes and adjusted artillery fire.

The coming of spring brought rain and warmer temperatures that melted snow, thawed frozen rivers, and caused flooding. Roads became all but impassible, and trenches turned into streams of mud. Water-soaked aging sandbags, which rotted and split, undermined timbers already weakened by sustained Chinese shelling. In March, noncommissioned officers from the division's engineer battalion inspected the Jamestown Line and evaluated the condition of the defenses, deter-



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A169051

After loading the 155mm howitzer, artillerymen of the 4th Battalion, 11th Marines, make a final check on the sights. The gunner stands by with lanyard in hand, waiting for the command to fire.

mining which bunkers and fighting holes had to be repaired or rebuilt. Marine infantrymen did the actual work under the supervision of the engineers, using materials man-handled into position by the Korean Service Corps. At the out-

posts or on those portions of the main line of resistance under enemy observation, the work had to be done at night.

Warmer weather heralded the appearance of a beer ration—two cans per day for each Marine not

engaged in actual fighting. Although the beer issued to Marines had a lesser alcohol content than that sold to civilians in the United States, it was welcome indeed. Those who drank made friends with those who did not, and a brisk trade in beer ensued.

Spring also brought the certainty that, as soon as weather permitted, the Chinese would renew their attacks on the Jamestown Line and its outposts, duplicating the intensity of the fight for the Hook (now a responsibility of the 2d Infantry Division) that had raged in October 1952. The enemy's capture of key terrain could yield political advantage as well as immediate tactical gain. Chinese success might force the Marines back to the Wyoming or Kansas Lines, both of them fallback positions, or even open the way to Seoul. Smaller gains could combine to exert pressure on the United Nations to accept a truce and, if the ceasefire should fail, leave the Chinese in a stronger

A Marine 4.5-inch rocket crew launches a fire mission against Communist positions. The launcher could discharge 24 rounds in rapid succession. Two helicopters from Marine

Helicopter Transport Squadron 161 wait in the background to airlift the crew and their rocket launcher to the rear or a new position.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A346664





1stMarDiv Historical Diary Photo Supplement, Mar53
Each spring, protracted periods of rain and the seasonal thaw turn the earth into a quagmire, impeding movement even in trenches. Although road conditions became a serious problem, frontline units were kept supplied.

position to renew the fighting.

Certain of the Marine combat outposts had already demonstrated their importance, among them Bunker Hill, the site of deadly fighting during 1952. The list of critical outposts also included Reno, Carson, and Vegas, northeast of the Ungok hills, a massif that had been the objective of a number of Marine raids during the winter. The importance of the three outposts named for cities in Nevada, which the 5th Marines manned, derived from their proximity to a potential invasion route leading toward Seoul, a road that passed between Carson and the Ungok hills. In addition, control of the three outposts provided observation of the Chinese main line of resistance and certain areas immediately beyond, while screening

portions of the Jamestown Line and some its rear areas from enemy observers.

Forty or fifty Marines, with two Navy hospital corpsmen, manned each of the combat outposts. The Marines, often drawn from various

squads in different platoons, formed composite units with numbers and firepower comparable to a reinforced platoon. In addition to their rifles, Browning automatic rifles, carbines, and pistols, the defenders usually were reinforced

The Korean Service Corps

The government of the Republic of Korea drafted men already rejected for service in the army and assigned them to a labor force, the Korean Service Corps, organized into companies, battalions, and regiments that carried supplies, food, ammunition, and building materials to combat units and performed other necessary logistics duties. Although the service troops wore a uniform, they were not issued weapons. On the Jamestown Line, a Korean Service Corps regiment, usually numbering more than 5,000 men, supported the components of the 1st Marine Division. Besides forming human pack trains, these Korean laborers helped evacuate the wounded, buried enemy dead, and retrieved weapons abandoned on the battlefield.

After the Marines moved onto the Jamestown Line in the spring of 1952, some 500 members of the Korean Service Corps helped cut timbers for the construction of bunkers along the frontline and for the two fall-back positions, the Wyoming and Kansas Lines. By July, the Koreans had helped cut and shape some 35,000 lengths of timber. Once the bunkers were completed, the Korean Service Corps carried new timbers, sandbags, barbed wire, and other materials to strengthen them and repair battle damage, along with food and ammunition. When manhandling cargo, each Korean laborer was expected to carry 50 pounds a distance of 10 miles, a burden affixed to an A-frame on the porter's back. Over long distances or rugged terrain, the laborers might adopt a relay system, dividing the journey into manageable segments.

Two members of the Korean Service Corps work under the supervision of an explosive ordnance disposal Marine and taught how to remove explosives from bombs and artillery shells. Once the explosives were removed, the cases were disposed of.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A169560





National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A170193

Members of the 1st Squad, 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, wait to be briefed on a night combat patrol involving the setting of an ambush. Since early March, the 1st Battalion had conducted nearly a dozen such patrols to test the enemy in the Carson-Reno-Vegas area.

with two portable flamethrowers and as many as five light machine guns. One or more forward observers adjusted the fire of 60mm and 81mm mortars in defense of each outpost.

The three outposts of Carson, Reno, and Vegas differed from one another according to their location, the terrain to be defended, and the threat they faced. Combat Outpost Carson, on the left, guarded a largely barren hilltop where a cave provided living quarters for the Marines, who manned an oval perimeter protected by barbed wire and including bunkers, tunnels, and a main trench with fighting holes. Except for the slope nearest the Jamestown Line, where a deeper entrenchment was being dug, the main trench on Carson averaged five feet deep by two feet wide. Most of the 28 fighting holes had excellent fields of fire, though the overhead cover on some of them had reduced the opening for observation and firing. During darkness, two listening posts covered the likeliest avenues of enemy attack, from the Ungok hills

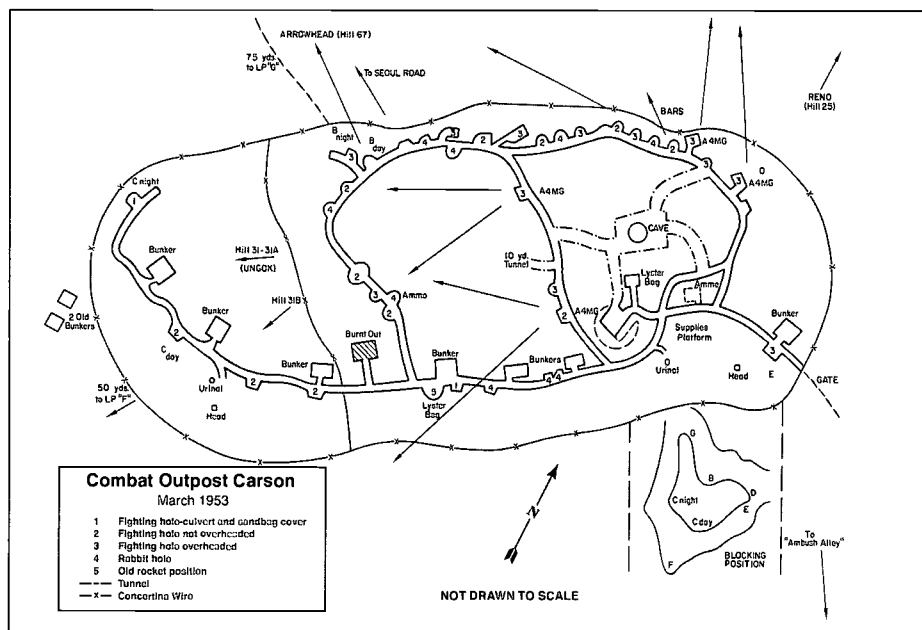
to the west and Hill 67 to the north.

Reno, in the center, was the most vulnerable of the three. It not only lay closest to Chinese lines, but also occupied a ridge that forced the defenders into a perimeter vaguely resembling the wishbone of a turkey, open end to the north. As at Carson, a cave served as living quarters and might also become a last-ditch redoubt. A tunnel provided access to the cave from the main trench, which varied from five to seven feet deep, but one Marine, Corporal James D. Prewitt, confessed that he hated to go through the entrance. As a boy, he explained: "I had helped dig my brother out of a collapsed play tunnel, and I was left with a real horror of such things."

Two Marines at Outpost Reno make their hourly call to the company command post. Located more than 1,600 yards from the main line of resistance, the outpost was customarily manned by 40 to 43 Marines.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A170020

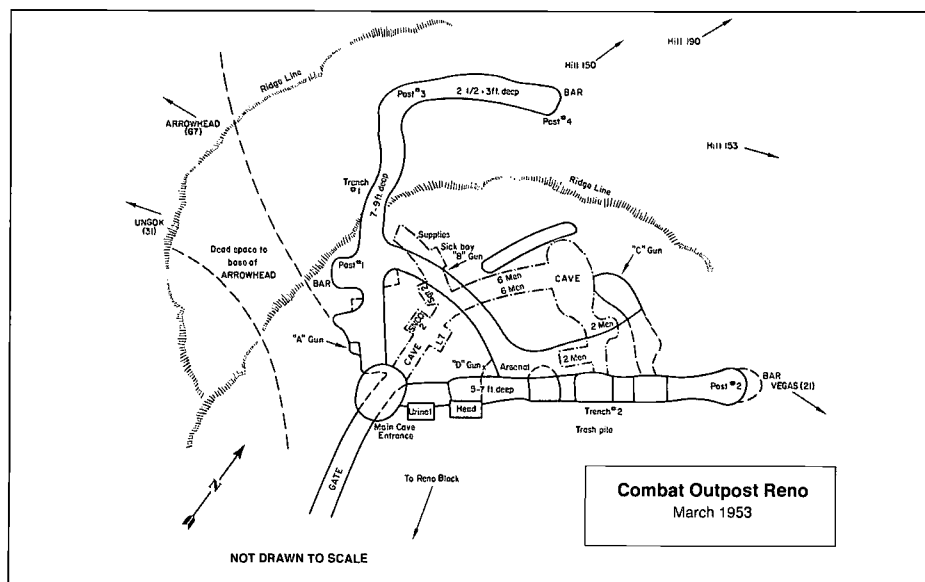
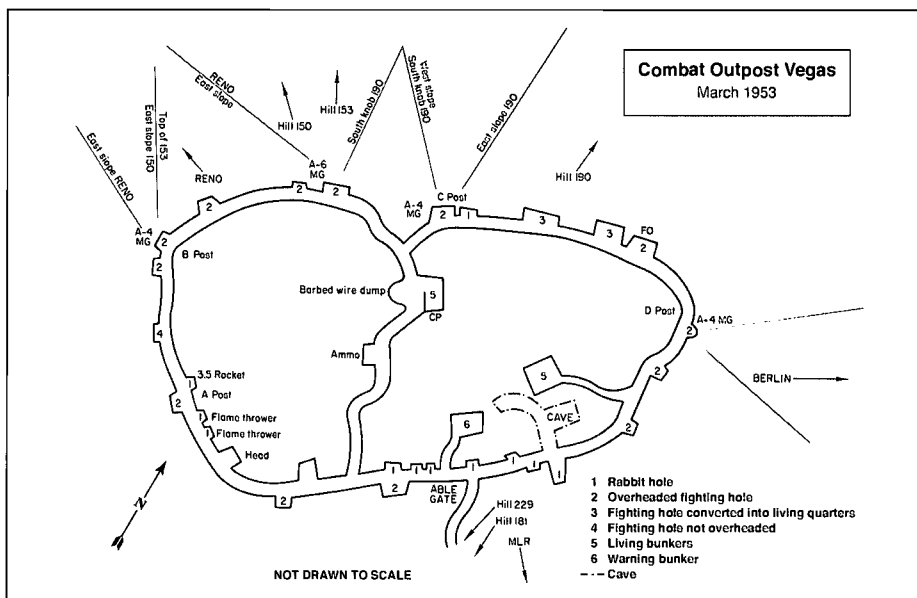




The Marines at Reno built no bunkers, relying exclusively on fighting holes in the trenches and, as a last resort, the cave itself. Outpost Reno had limited fields of fire in the direction of enemy-held Hill 67, also called Arrowhead Hill, but Outpost Carson, on the left, provided fire support in this area. As a result, the approach that seemed to pose the greatest danger to Reno's defenders followed a ridge extending generally southward from Hill 150.

Like the Marines defending the other outposts, those at Reno relied on C-rations and tossed the

empty cans into nearby gullies. At night, when the tin cans clattered, the source of the noise might be Chinese moving close to attack behind a sudden barrage or merely rats scavenging for food. Members of the Korean Service Corps kept Reno supplied and performed the unpleasant task, as after the fighting in October 1952, of burying the Chinese dead, a task repeated whenever artillery fire disinterred the corpses. Marines from Reno accompanied the Korean burial details to protect them against ambush and also to keep them at their grisly work. Enemy snipers, as well as mortar



and artillery crews, posed a continuing threat, forcing the Marines to remain under cover during daylight, insofar as possible. Indeed, a sniper alerted by the reflection from a forward observer's field glasses, fatally wounded the Marine with a single shot. Because of the danger, tension, and discomfort, the Marines at Reno normally stayed only for a week before being relieved.

To the south of Reno lay Reno Block, an L-shaped trench with a small bunker at the end of the shorter leg and a machine gun position at the point where the



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A170011

The trenchline on Outpost Reno; to the left of the "L" where the trench changes direction lies Reno Block, the site of savage fighting on the night of 26-27 March 1953.

legs joined. At night a reinforced squad manned the blocking position, which served as a listening post, helped screen the movement of supplies and reinforcements, and provided a rallying point for relief columns ambushed by Chinese patrols. Perched on a hilltop, Reno Block afforded excellent visibility, but conversely it could easily be seen from Chinese lines. Consequently, as a Marine who served there recalled: "We would light a cigarette under cover of a coat or blanket, then when we took a drag it was with both hands cupped to hide the glow," which could draw sniper fire. Marines manning Reno's east-west trench could fire in support of the blocking position, as could the garrison at Carson.

To the right of Reno loomed Combat Outpost Vegas, which attained a height of 175 meters and, as the tallest of the three, afforded the best fields of observation. Barbed wire and a well-constructed trench encircled the egg-shaped perimeter on Vegas, with its one warming and two living bunkers. Although the fields of fire on Vegas were less than ideal, handicapped in places by a steeply

pitched slope too irregular for grazing fire and also by the small firing apertures in some of the covered fighting holes, weapons there could support Reno with long-range fire. By day, Vegas proved a magnet for sniper fire and harassment by mortars and artillery, forcing the Marines to remain under cover. A tour of duty at Vegas usually lasted three days for infantry and no more than five for artillery forward observers.

Attack on Carson, Reno, and Vegas

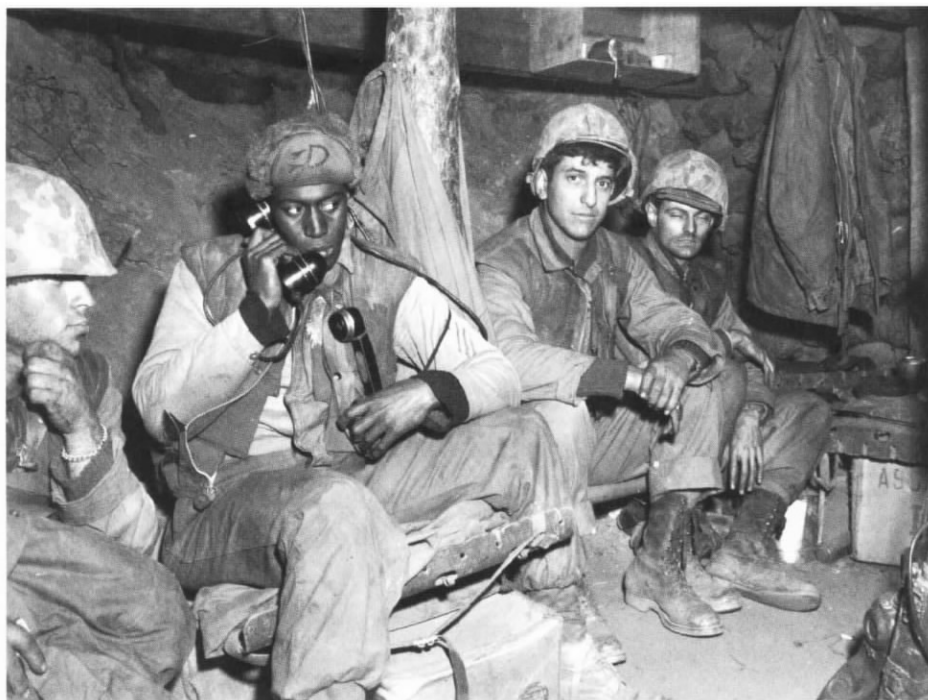
Although the 5th Marines had been active during March—raiding Hill 31A in the Ungok hill mass and patrolling by night, especially in the vicinity of Carson, Reno, and Vegas—the Chinese tended to avoid combat. The lull ended abruptly at 1900 on 26 March, when the Chinese shattered the springtime evening with fire from small arms, machine guns, mortars, and artillery. Almost every Chinese weapon within range raked the left and center of the sector manned by the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines.

Combat Outposts Carson, Reno,

and Vegas, each manned by a composite platoon from the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, underwent a savage bombardment. An estimated 1,200 60mm and 82mm mortar rounds exploded on Carson within roughly 20 minutes, and the shelling continued at the rate of about one round every 40 seconds until 2200. The Chinese gunners also directed counterbattery fire at the howitzer positions of the 11th Marines, sought to interdict movement behind the main line of resistance, and tried to sever the telephone lines and routes of movement between the battalion and the threatened outposts.

The bombardment of Carson, Reno, and Vegas formed one part of a general shelling of outposts all along the Jamestown Line. To the right of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, the Chinese lashed out at Berlin and East Berlin, manned by Marines of the regiment's 3d Battalion. To the left of the 5th Marines, artillery fire and sometimes infantry threatened the outposts of the 1st Marines, like Hedy, Bunker Hill, Esther, and Dagmar. Chinese troops also seemed to be positioning themselves to attack in the sector of the Korean Marines.

On the night of 26 March, the general bombardment fell most heavily on Carson, Reno, and Vegas, and just 10 minutes after the shells began exploding there, some 3,500 soldiers from the *358th Regiment, 120th Division*, of the Chinese *46th Army* began converging on the three outposts. Taking advantage of the shelling, two platoons advanced from the Ungok hills to attack Carson, while one Chinese company stormed Reno and another Vegas. Yet another company—this one from Arrowhead Hill and nearby Hill 29—crossed the road to Seoul to attack Reno from the northwest.



5th Marines Historical Diary Photo Supplement, Mar53

Marines on Vegas huddle in the command post bunker as Chinese mortars and artillery pound the outpost. While Marine artillery responded with protective boxing and variable-time fires on the outpost and routes of approach, defending infantry called down 60mm and 81mm mortar barrages.

Meanwhile, Chinese troops from Hill 190 outflanked Reno on its left to hit the outpost from the rear, and others advanced from the high ground north of Vegas to storm the outpost head-on.

The fight for Carson, a part of the enemy's main effort, pitted Chinese numbers, perhaps 20 attackers for every defender, against a determined garrison that could be readily reinforced from the main line of resistance. In the first 35 minutes, the attackers penetrated the outer trenches at Carson, but the Marines fought the Chinese to a standstill in a fierce hand-to-hand struggle. Moving their wounded to the shelter of the centrally located cave, the defenders continued to fire from their fighting holes along the main trench. As squads from Companies C and D of Lieutenant Colonel Jonas M. Platt's 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, were moving out to reinforce Carson, the Chinese relaxed the pressure on that outpost, shift-

ing their attention to Reno and Vegas. The attack began to ebb at about 2135, but mortars and artillery continued to pound the Marines on Carson. The violent though brief assault, followed by sustained shelling, took a psychological as well as physical toll among Carson's surviving defenders. For example, the outpost commander, First Lieutenant Jack F. Ingalls, who survived unwounded, seemed to have aged 10 years, according to a sergeant who knew him.

Reno, where the terrain precluded the establishment of a tight perimeter, proved harder to defend than Carson and, because it was farther from the main line of resistance, more difficult to reinforce. As at Carson, the Chinese gained a hold on the outer works, but at Reno they capitalized on this early success and forced the Marines to fall back to the cave that anchored the position. At 2030, Outpost Reno reported by radio that the

enemy controlled everything outside the cave, which was collapsing under the sustained shelling. According to the message, death, wounds, and the lack of oxygen inside the cave left only seven Marines able to fight.

Supporting weapons did their best to save the doomed outpost. Aided by flares from an aircraft and illuminating rounds, machine gunners on the main line of resistance and rocket batteries just to the rear fired into the Chinese swarming over Reno, while variable-time artillery shells burst overhead, showering the attackers with deadly fragments. Two Marine M-46 tanks, on the Jamestown Line just behind Reno, joined in with their 90mm guns. Radio contact with the Marines fighting at the outpost faded, and then failed entirely—never to be restored.

Chinese forces also seemed on the verge of victory at Outpost Vegas. The intensity of the bombardment and overwhelming numbers forced the Marines from their least defensible positions. A breakdown in communication hampered efforts to reinforce Vegas, as Chinese artillery fire tore up telephone wires leading from the outposts to the battalion command post. Radio had to replace wire.

While the defenders of Vegas were undergoing attack, the 5th Marines sought to reinforce Outpost Reno, with the 1st Battalion assuming operational control of those elements of the 2d Battalion involved in the effort. At 2015, advance elements of a platoon from Company F, 2d Battalion, set out from the main line of resistance, fought their way out of an ambush near Hill 47, but were pinned down short of Reno Block, which had yet to be manned that night and had been occupied by the Chinese. The reinforced 3d Platoon, Company

A Platoon at Reno Block

The 3d Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion—reinforced by an attached machine gun section—manned a portion of the Jamestown Line on the night of 26 March 1953. The men of the platoon, led by Second Lieutenant Warren C. Ruthazer, were standing the usual nighttime alert when they heard Chinese artillery exploding along the combat outpost line. Soon the bombardment began battering the main line of resistance, and Ruthazer summoned his noncommissioned officers to the command post where he told them that a Chinese attack on Outpost Reno had driven the defenders into the cave there and might soon overwhelm them.

Each night, a reinforced rifle squad, occupied Reno Block, a listening post about 100 yards closer to the main line of resistance than Reno itself. On this evening, however, the Chinese bombardment prevented the squad from moving out. As a result, the garrison intended for Reno Block, a reinforced squad from the 1st Platoon of Company C, joined forces with Lieutenant Ruthazer's 3d Platoon.

Shortly after 2000, the reinforced 3d Platoon, and its additional squad, received orders to drive the Chinese from Outpost Reno and bring back the surviving Marines. The men of the rescue force carried shovels and entrenching tools to free Marines trapped in the cave or in collapsed trenches, along with grenades for close-in fighting. Ruthazer's platoon started along a trail that extended some 1,800 yards, served Reno Block, and terminated at Reno. The Marines had to remain close to the trail because of minefields on both flanks, thus becoming more vulnerable to ambush. They avoided bunching up, dropped to the ground when necessary to escape enemy fire, and then jumped to their feet, rushing forward until again forced to hug the muddy earth. One of the many mortar shells that exploded along the trail burst close enough to Sergeant William H. Janzen, the platoon guide, to pelt him with dirt, and another landed directly in front of Private First Class Bobby G. Hatcher as he sprawled for cover alongside the trail, but the round failed to explode. During this ordeal, as he later recalled, Sergeant Janzen kept his sanity, although his face "was buried in the dirt and mud," by concentrating on repeating the Lord's Prayer.

To reach Reno Block, the force had to climb the steep hill on which the trench and bunker lay. The Marines had rigged a strong rope alongside the trail to help the heavily laden troops pull themselves upward. Chinese mortar and artillery fire had cut the rope, however, and the platoon had to claw its way up the slope. Atop the hill, the men entered a trench so shallow that at times the Marines had to crawl toward the blocking position.

The Chinese concentrated on the head of the relief column instead of trying to encircle it. Sergeant Janzen



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 13964

At a December 1953 battalion review, MajGen Randolph McC. Pate, commander of the 1st Marine Division, presents the Navy Cross, the nation's second highest award for military valor, to Hospital Corpsman Paul N. Polley.

believed that this decision enabled the platoon to cling to the segment of trench, making it the anchor of a ragged perimeter. The arrival of Captain Ralph L. Walz and two platoons from his Company F, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, tipped the balance in favor of the Marines, at least momentarily. The captain quickly mounted a bayonet charge, described by Janzen as "magnificent, heroic, and ghastly," that overwhelmed the Chinese at Reno Block.

Two corpsmen with Ruthazer's platoon, Hospitalman Third Class Paul N. Polley and Hospitalman Francis C. Hammond, struggled to care for the increasing number of casualties at Reno Block. Temporarily blinded by dirt thrown in his face by an exploding shell, Polley continued as best he could to tend to the wounded by sense of touch. Hammond, though already wounded, voluntarily remained behind with Captain Walz's Marines when the platoon from Company C received orders to withdraw. Hammond, killed when a mortar shell exploded near him, was awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor; Polley lived to receive the Navy Cross.

Casualty evacuation teams began arriving shortly after the 3d Platoon received orders to disengage. The survivors able to move about on their own had gathered at the base of the hill, when someone reported seeing a machine gunner, Private First Class Mario Lombardi, half-buried in a collapsed trench. A final search located Lombardi, whose legs had been broken, and his comrades brought him back. Of the 40 Marines in the reinforced 3d Platoon, fewer than 10 returned unscathed to the main line of resistance.

C, 1st Battalion—led by Second Lieutenant Warren C. Ruthazer—started toward Reno at 2030, together with the squad that had been assigned to Reno Block but had not yet deployed, and reached the enemy-held blocking position despite twice coming under long-range fire and twice being ambushed. Two platoons of Company F, 2d Battalion, followed in the wake of Ruthazer's men, leaving the Jamestown Line at 2227 and advancing toward Reno Block until stopped by fire from the Chinese holding the blocking position. Here these latest reinforcements, under Captain Ralph L. Walz, the commander of Company F, found Ruthazer's Marines, the

elements of Company F dispatched earlier, and a platoon from Company D sent to reinforce Outpost Vegas but stopped near Reno Block by Chinese fire. Captain Walz took command of the group and launched an attack that drove the enemy from the blocking position.

The cobbled-together force of Marines clinging to Reno Block, now commanded by Captain Ralph L. Walz of Company F, tried gallantly but unsuccessfully to reach the composite force from the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, that manned Outpost Reno when the battle began. Chinese attacks on the blocking position continued without respite, forcing the

Marines to beat back three separate assaults by midnight and denying them an opportunity to mount a strong attack of their own. While the fighting raged at Reno Block, the Chinese marshaled reinforcements of their own behind Hills 31 and 31D. Fire from Marine artillery and from tanks on the main line of resistance scattered one such group as it massed to join in attacking Reno, but the Chinese prevailed, killing or capturing all the defenders. The survivors consisted of just five Marines—among them the outpost commander, Second Lieutenant Rufus A. Seymour of Company C, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines—and a Navy corpsman. They became

Marines of the 4.2-inch mortar company, 5th Marines, unload ammunition in support of the assault to retake Outpost Vegas. Because of the heavy incoming fire, trucks

were unable to get to the company's mortar positions, so the Marines had to haul the ammunition up by carts.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A170437



prisoners of war and were ultimately repatriated.

The Chinese capture of Reno freed one of the companies that had helped subdue that outpost. The enemy assigned it the mission of delivering a coup de grace to Reno Block, but Marine artillery and tanks firing from the main line of resistance caught the Chinese as they moved south and frustrated the plan. The blocking position remained in Marine hands, at least temporarily.

During the struggle for Reno and Reno Block, Outpost Vegas continued to hold out, but almost from the time the Chinese attacked, contact with Vegas proved uncertain. To facilitate the restoration of reliable communications by wire, and if necessary with runners, Colonel Walt, the commander of the 5th Marines, shifted operational control of the Marines on Vegas, and those attempting to reinforce them, from the 2d Battalion to the 3d Battalion. Shortly before midnight, contact with Vegas ended. All the Marines there were either killed or captured; the dead included the officer in charge, First Lieutenant Kenneth E. Taft, Jr.

Initial Counterattacks End

At midnight, after some five hours of fighting, the Chinese controlled Vegas and Reno, although Carson remained under Marine control. The Marines trying to break through to Vegas or Reno had thus far got no farther than Reno Block, but they kept trying. At 0144, Captain Walz, in command of Company F and in charge of the composite force at the blocking position, reported that he had only the equivalent of one reinforced platoon to break through to Reno. Within an hour, Walz had launched three attacks, each one stopped by fire from



National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A170429

A Marine gives a wounded buddy a drink while others prepare him for evacuation. During the initial attempts to regain control of Outposts Reno and Vegas, both Marine and enemy casualties were heavy; an estimated 600 Chinese had been wounded or killed while Marine losses were placed at more than 150.

mortars and small arms. For now the outpost would remain in Chinese hands. The attempts to reach Outpost Reno on the night and early morning of 26-27 March resulted in severe Marine casualties that Colonel Walt later estimated as being "as high as 35 percent, with many dead."

On the early morning of 27 March, while the attempts to fight through to Outpost Reno were ending in frustration, two platoons organized from Companies D, 2d Battalion, and C, 1st Battalion, of the 5th Marines advanced toward Vegas. They worked their way as close as 400 yards to the entrance to the outpost's trenches before a fresh Chinese assault stopped them. This setback forced the 1st Marine Division to commit a part of its reserve.

The 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Alexander G. Cereghino and functioning as part of the division

reserve, placed its Company F under the operational control of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, for this new effort to reach Vegas. The platoon leading the way advanced to within 200 yards of the outpost, but could only confirm that the enemy had already seized it. Beginning at about 0300, the Marines who had made this early morning attempt to break through to Vegas withdrew to the main line of resistance, arriving there at 0417. Earlier on the night of the 26th, Colonel Walt had given his 3d Battalion operational control over the attempts to save Vegas; now he ratified the decision by shifting the boundary between the 1st and 3d Battalions some 250 yards to the west.

The eight-hour fight at Vegas and on its approaches cost the Chinese an estimated 600 casualties, four times the total of Marines killed or wounded. Unremitting Chinese mortar and artillery fire